

Exhibit A

NEWS > CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Maggot-infested meals being served to inmates at Brooklyn federal jail, lawyers say



Maggots are pictured in this undated file photo. (Shutterstock)



By **JOHN ANNESE** | JANNESE@nydailynews.com | New York Daily News

PUBLISHED: March 30, 2024 at 10:44 a.m. | UPDATED: March 30, 2024 at 1:38 p.m.

Brooklyn's [troubled federal jail](#) has been serving maggot-infested beans to detainees, according to defense lawyers.

The apparent barf-inducing food conditions at the Metropolitan Detention Center were detailed [in a letter sent on behalf of Joseph Elias](#), a convicted arsonist who's asking for time served after being held at the Sunset Park jail for more than 20 months.

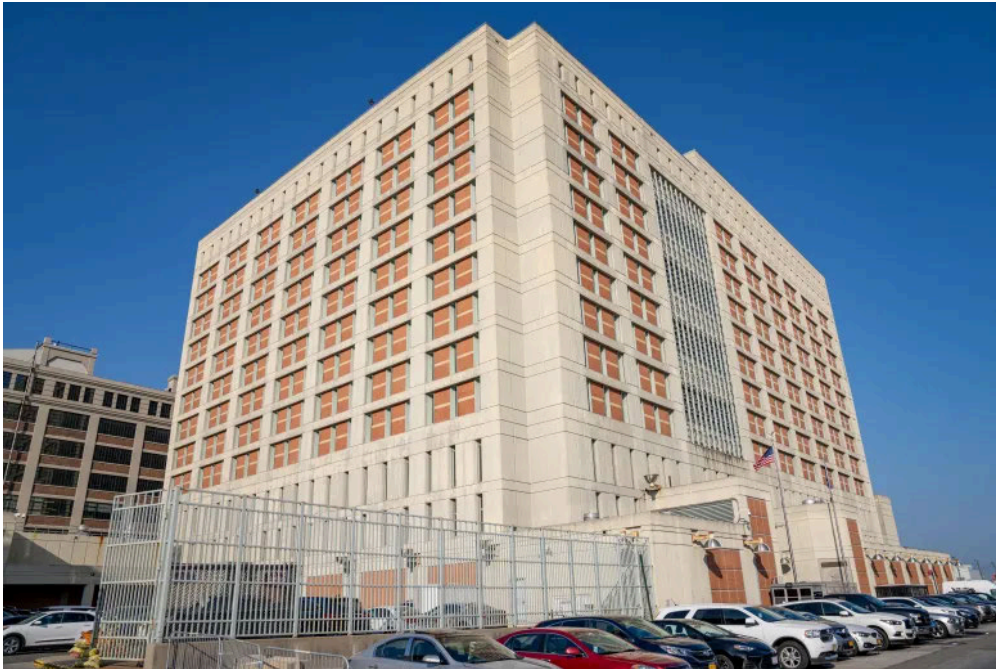
["The MDC](#) had begun serving him maggot infested food in the SHU [segregated housing unit] as well as food to which he is allergic, including fish, which is listed as an allergy in his medical records," wrote defense lawyer Michael Robotti in a letter to Brooklyn Federal Court [Judge LaShann DeArcy Hall](#), who's scheduled to sentence Elias this week.

"Joseph showed us what appeared to be maggots that were in his food during a video call. As a result of the maggots and allergens, Joseph stopped eating the food being served to him."

Elias's lawyers asked MDC's lawyers on March 15 and March 19 that he no longer receive infested food or fish, and that he be given Ensure to help him regain the weight he'd lost, but the agency blew off both requests, Robotti wrote.

"The ongoing harsh conditions of confinement at the MDC warrant time served here. Joseph needs mental-health and drug treatment; far from providing him the support that he needs, the MDC is exacerbating Joseph's conditions," he wrote.

His letter, and the request for leniency, comes on the heels of [a Manhattan federal judge's ruling](#) that conditions at the MDC are so bad they constituted "extraordinary reasons" not to lock up another defendant awaiting sentencing in a drug case.



The Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. (Theodore Parisienne for New York Daily News)

Elias isn't the only one there dealing with maggot infested meals.

"This is the worst I've ever known it to be," said defense lawyer Esere Onaodowan. One of her clients, who she didn't name, was served infested and spoiled food during a 20-day stay in the SHU, and he's lost 15 pounds as a result, she said.

"Recently, within the last two weeks, there's been maggots in the beans they gave them. The chicken is partially cooked, but then also spoiled, rotting meat," she said. "The milk is served four days after the expiration date, so it's often spoiled."

The problems aren't limited to solitary confinement — Onaodowan said her client has worked in the jail kitchen, where he would remove cockroaches and bug parts from the food before serving it to his fellow detainees.

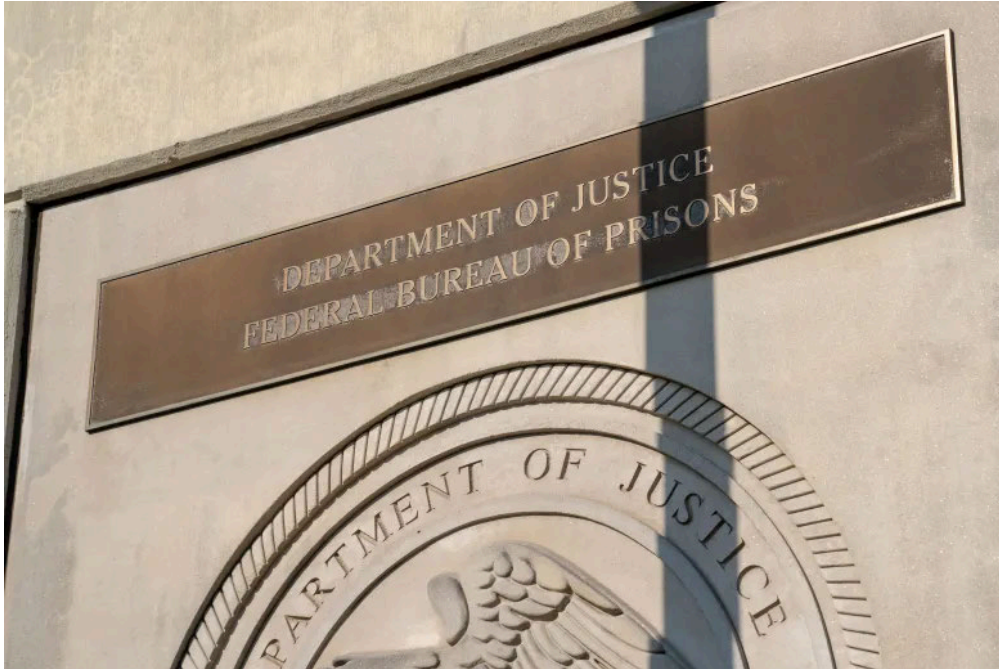
Federal Bureau of Prisons spokesman Scott Taylor wouldn't answer questions about the specific complaints about the MDC, though he offered general comment about how the federal prison system is committed to the safety and health of its inmates.

"For privacy, safety, and security reasons, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) does not comment on matters related to pending litigation, ongoing legal proceedings, or ongoing investigations nor do we comment on anecdotal allegations," he said.

The MDC, which handles pre-trial detention for both the Manhattan and Brooklyn federal courts and houses close to 1,400 federal inmates, has [long been plagued](#) by short-staffing, constant lockdowns and miserable conditions.

Those problems most recently boiled over in January, when Manhattan Federal Court Judge Jesse Furman issued [a 19-page ruling](#) laying out a litany of problems, including how [the jail lost power](#) for eight days in 2019 during a polar vortex.

“It has gotten to the point that it is routine for judges in both this District and the Eastern District [Brooklyn] to [give reduced sentences](#) to defendants based on the conditions of confinement in the MDC,” Furman wrote. “Prosecutors no longer even put up a fight, let alone dispute that the state of affairs is unacceptable.”



A plaque outside of the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. (Theodore Parisienne for New York Daily News)

His ruling, that the jail’s dreadful conditions constituted “extraordinary reasons” to not lock up a 70-year-old convicted drug dealer as he awaited sentencing, has since been cited by several defense lawyers seeking leniency or release for their clients.

It’s not clear whether Elias, 37, a career criminal who pleaded guilty to arson conspiracy last year, will get a break when he’s sentenced April 5.

He was recruited as part of an extortion scheme to hurl four Molotov cocktails at the Magnum Automotive Body Shop on March 22, 2022, torching several luxury vehicles, Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric Silverberg wrote [in a December sentencing memo](#).

Elias then called the shop's owner and offered to identify the arson culprit in exchange for cash — offering up an innocent party after getting paid, prosecutors said. He also took a video of the blaze from his apartment window and boasted, "You hear that? ... That's the sound of a beautiful job well done," according to Silverberg's memo.

Prosecutors are asking for a sentence of 77 to 96 months in prison.

The U.S. Attorney's office in Brooklyn declined comment for this story.

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Exhibit B

CNA Insider

In a first, 5 inmates jailed multiple times tell all from inside Changi's maximum-security prison



Image taken from prison CCTV



Exhibit C

1 May 2024



To The Honorable Sentencing Judge,

I am a close friend of Omar's and have known him for just over three years. We first met just before he was held in remand at Changi prison in Singapore. I am an elementary school teacher and was working at an American school there at the time. I am currently based in Jakarta, Indonesia teaching at Jakarta Intercultural School, however my home base is in the United States.

I visited Omar in jail once a week for 14 months. I began supporting him as an act of service to his family, who I'd known since 2012. I acted as the first point of contact and advocated for Omar's basic human rights as the reality of Singapore's penal system became apparent.

I am writing this letter in the hope that Omar receives the minimum sentence possible. When I think about the crimes he committed to get himself to where he is today, I struggle believing it is the same person I know now. We have spent hours talking, reflecting, sharing, planning, and questioning the thoughts and behavior patterns that got him to this place. Initially, he struggled to take ownership for his actions, but through the discovery of Stoicism and the suffering endured by being completely stripped of his basic human rights, he has been able to face his demons honestly.

Omar has experienced suffering like many of us living in a developed country never will. He slept on a concrete floor in a cell the size of a closet with multiple cellmates for 3 years. He went several weeks at a time without being able to leave that cell. He endured hunger because Changi prison does not provide inmates with enough food and the food they do provide is of such low quality, that we wouldn't feed it to our animals. He developed health conditions that required him to spend considerable time in the medical facility where he and others were shackled in two places to the metal bed and unable to go to the bathroom when needed. He observed young men from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds being executed for selling substances that are legal elsewhere, or using substances for which we would typically offer rehabilitation instead. The list of unfathomable experiences are endless and inconceivable to you and I. Most people in his shoes fall to mental illness, but Omar did not. Instead, he immersed himself in a daily routine of study and reflection. He clutched on tightly to the words of others, such as Viktor Frankl and Marcus Aurelius and used them to endure whatever came his way.

Being at Changi prison, Omar was able to make a difference in the lives of his fellow inmates and got a taste of what it feels like to be of service to others in a context far removed from anything materialistic. Combine this experience with his recent psychological evaluation, and he has the self-awareness and necessary support system to reinvent himself and live a meaningful life.

Omar wants to take the experiences, wisdom and knowledge he has gained over the last three years and start again. His family and I fear that more incarceration time could take its toll mentally. We believe wholeheartedly that he will be of more benefit to himself and to society if he is able to go home soon.

For these reasons, I ask you to consider the minimum sentencing duration for Omar.

With gratitude,

Lia Jakins Chumtong

Exhibit D

Exhibit E

Dear Judge Marrero,

I have been in this life for fifty years, but I've only been trying to work out its riddle for the past two years. Changi Prison, my imprisonment, and my loss of freedom became, against all odds, a piece of good fortune because these have driven me to philosophy. I have learned so much about life, about perspectives on life and about relationships, with people and with myself since discovering Stoicism.

For most of my life, I was too busy chasing unimportant things, mimicking the wrong influences, and following disappointing paths. I chose a life of narcissism, egotism, dishonesty, and greed, and never did a damn thing about it. While this life brings a few seconds of relief and pleasure, there is a cost to cheating, stealing, to doing the wrong thing. Here in prison, where I've hit rock bottom, I am nothing but a number. Crimes return upon those who commit them.

I had a sequence of people to hold me to account and make me better, but I let myself get distracted by temptations. I've watched not one, not two, but three wives walk out of the door. How does something like that happen? But even when my life was imploding right in front of me, I didn't realise my shortcomings. I covered them up with a sheer force of personality. Jo (my second wife) tried, by making me see a psychologist in Doha, but I wasn't being honest to myself, and the time I put in was wasted.

The irony is that all this only became apparent to me after being imprisoned. Seneca spoke of philosophy as a way to look in the mirror, to scrape one's faults, because for a Stoic, this chance is always there. Even in the worst of circumstances, as bad as imprisonment or any adversity is, it can make you better if you choose. When your actions land you a lengthy prison sentence something has gone wrong. You've failed not only yourself but the basic society and morality. I have failed myself and society and morality.

It has taken significant time for me to reach this conclusion. As hard as I tried, I couldn't accept the nightmare my life had become after I was imprisoned in April 2021. Hidden away in a concrete box, staring at the bleak walls of my cell, I was scared and terrified just about every day. I was around all these inmates facing capital charges and felt helpless. My friends, Lia and Donna, taught me to find meaning in my daily suffering through the books they sent me.

Until recently, I had an impossible relationship with myself. It's love and hate, construction and destruction, genuine and false. I could be warm to myself, but also very critical. I could tell my darkest secrets to myself, but also I cheat and delude myself. I know what's good for myself, but I often do exactly the opposite, while making convincing excuses to appease myself. I can be awfully proud of myself, but the next day I want to run away. And in return my self talks non-stop - planning, strategizing, debating, assessing, critiquing, self-judging, questioning, doubting.

The noise of the radio station in my head would never cease. Out of the right speaker would come the endless stream of self-aggrandisement, the recitation of your specialness, of how much more open and gifted and brilliant and knowing and misunderstood and humble you are. Out of the left speaker will be the rap songs of self-loathing, the list of all the things you don't do well, all the mistakes you have made over a lifetime, the doubt, the assertion that everything that you touch turns to shit, that you don't do relationships well, that you are in every way a fraud, incapable of selfless love, that you have no talent or insight, and on and on and on.

I've become, with time, a better friend to myself - an admission that may have been fuelled by an early feeling of not being good enough, of not being worth much.

In the past, I allowed my ego to prevail over my integrity. I avoided owning my actions, blamed others for the choices I made, and played the victim. This is not who I want to be anymore. I am beginning to learn the power of honesty. This has set me free from the turmoil that has consumed me over the years. I can now be honest with my family, my friends, and myself and as a result, I am free to learn and grow from my mistakes. I've made a serious mistake, and I'm suffering serious consequences for that decision. That's the bad news. The good news is that I can decide how this will affect me as I move forward. I'm not a bad person, but I have made some truly terrible decisions.

Stoicism showed me that my ego is the enemy. I intend to no longer seek excitement, obsession, and lust, rather I am choosing a path with purpose. I have a better idea of what it means to live a good life, and what it means to be a good man, but I have far more to study and far more to learn. I am grateful for having support from my family and friends.

Despite being at the bottom of the barrel, I'm not worried any longer about how I'll make money, or how I'll be able to support myself. I've come to a point in my life where I'll listen to my mind, and I trust that if I follow the right path, all will work out in the end. Besides, I know first-hand that money doesn't solve problems. In fact, no material possession will. External things can't fix internal issues.

It has become blatantly clear to me that I always needed help and I failed to get it. I am no longer ashamed to ask for help. I must take ownership of the choices I have made, past and present.

Every morning, I read *The Daily Stoic*, but instead of just reading one meditation for the day, I re-read all the previous day's meditations with the intention that they become a part of my DNA. Throughout the day, I ask myself the same questions as Seneca did: *What bad habit did I curb today? How am I better? Were my actions just? How can I improve? What did I do that was unfriendly, unsocial, or uncaring?*

I have also picked a new habit of journalling. I wish I'd done it before. Part of journalling is that now you have your actions in black and white. Before this, I only planned for the activities that I intended to do. I never reflected on what I'd done. I used to go to a club and spend \$20, \$30,000.00 in one night. It's easy to have a great time and not think about it after. But if you write it down the following day, then you realise it was excessive and stupid. Once you've written it down, you are held accountable for the actions.

I cannot undo the choices I have made, but as Epictetus said, I can control the choices I make right now. I'm eager to offer what I have, which is more than I ever realised. It seems to me that my total demonstrated failure at being a good man is more than matched by the urgency of being a good person. I hope my friends and family will find solace in this statement and will be able to forgive me for the pain and suffering I have caused.

Stoicism has provided me with a window into my soul. It is helping me to have a meaningful life, be more prepared for the troubles and temptations that lie ahead. Moving forward, I am engaging in daily reflection and am working towards being fully aware of my responses to situations in the present moment. Martin Luther King Jr would call this the Civil War between the 'North' and 'South' of our souls. We will always have competing parts within us, and what matters in life is which side we choose. Moving forward, I intend to be as William Ernest Henley puts it in the *Invictus* poem ... "the master of my soul, the captain of my fate."

This important journey inwards that I have been on for the last two years has also let me see just how badly I hurt other people, not least of all the victims of my crimes. I took what belonged to them. I wish I could undo the past. I cannot. But I can assure Your Honor that for the first time I understand myself, and as a result I can change my behavior. I am convinced of it. I know that my saying so means little at this point. But I will do everything in my power to live a good life in the future, a life of integrity. I want nothing more.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shamoon Omar Rafiq'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'S' and a prominent vertical stroke at the end.

Shamoon Omar Rafiq

Exhibit F

To: The Honourable Sentencing Judge

In one of his letters last year, my brother wrote: 'I've been in this life for almost 50 years now but I've only been trying to figure out its riddle for the past nine months'. It struck quite a cord with me as I feel that, whilst I have been in this life for 48 years now, I only now get to truly see who my brother is and the potential that lies within him. The past 3,5 years have been a living nightmare and we have experienced so much that I could write an entire book. But that's obviously not the aim of this letter.

My brother has always been a 'handful' as they put it. Whether it be at a very young age (I was given the responsibility of the house key at the age of 10 as my mother was afraid Omer would lose it) or later on in life with difficulties at school, in jobs, with money and relationships. I helped, supported, covered for him, paid for him, wrote letters.. whatever I could to get him out of trouble. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I just felt he was being incredibly difficult and annoying. Especially as he also wasn't very inclined to seek help or even acknowledge that he needed help. The difficulties escalated around 2017/2018 and I decided I didn't want any interaction with him whatsoever. An extremely difficult decision if you consider my nature of always putting other people, specifically family, first. I was tired of the fights and arguments, of him constantly getting into trouble and inflicting so much pain and sorrow to my parents.

I hadn't spoken to him for over two years when I was approached by one of his ex-wives on whether he was ok. The family bond kicked in instantly so I got worried and reached out to him. And I believe it's been since January 2021 that not a day has passed without me speaking or writing to him. It is an enormous understatement when I say that it has been the worst emotional rollercoaster ride we have ever been on as a family. The stress of facing that day in Singapore court in April 2021, his arrest, hearing about the charges in the US, the uncertainty of not knowing how and where he is, the lack of contact.

Then we moved into the phase of hearing from him again and we were confronted with the circumstances in which he had to reside. I hope you will understand that both the legal and penitentiary system in the Netherlands are very different to Singapore's and the US and it was extremely painful to realise where he had ended up and what it would take for him to survive. The first year of his imprisonment in Singapore was a shock to the system. Both his and ours. We have kept all of his letters and if you scroll over them you see blame, pain, anguish, despair, anger, resentment, fear, misery, more pain, physical and mental, more resentment and more despair. I have had to read numerous times that I was to blame for the pain and misery he was in. (I 'forced' him to go court for his bail hearing of which we knew that it wouldn't be extended). For someone who is highly sensitive to the effect she has on others, especially loved ones, that was hard to swallow and process. Experience after experience, (whether it be issues with cellmates, with the lack of food, the deterioration of his physical health, the pain, the insomnia..) we have had to read his frustration and his inability to cope. The tone of his letters was erratic. We never knew what to expect, week in, week out. The moments of frustration and anger were alternated with moments of 'peace' as he shared stories about others, or about some of the novels he had read. It seemed as if he tried to escape the reality of what had become his daily life and he tried to find solace by focusing on other people's stories. He rarely shared reflections on what had happened to him, on his life, on the charges and the events that led to the many mistakes and bad decisions he made.

[REDACTED]

And then he read Atomic Habits. It was November 2022. He had met Donna a few months before, who took over visiting him from our friend Lia. He was hesitant to see anyone else after Lia, presumably because he didn't want people to see him in those circumstances. Up until this point he also blatantly refused we come over and see him. But Donna connected to him like no one else has.

Omer has never been much of a reader. Of course, there isn't much else you can do in prison. But even the line of books he has ordered over the years are exemplary for the change he has undergone. We were quite surprised by the intensity with which he read Atomic Habits and all the

(self-help) books that followed. The tone of his letters changed. The reflections increased, the anger and frustration subsided and more and more coping mechanisms emerged. It was in one of his year-end letters where he reflected on his first year/year and a half in prison and he apologised for the pain he caused us through those initial letters. It is moments like these I will never forget as they have been so rare throughout our lives. There was remorse, reflection and acknowledgement. Reading turned into studying. Studying philosophy but also studying his own (past) behaviour. He shared his lessons with us, with Donna and even his kids (not knowing whether they would ever read his letters). The tone of his letters changed. Yes, there is still pain, his physical health is still deteriorating, the dynamics have changed extremely with his move to the US but there is no more frustration, no anger, no resentment. With the help of Donna, [REDACTED] and his studies he has finally come to understand what his drivers and his pitfalls have been. He is (re)discovering himself and for the first time in his life being truly honest with and to himself. And to us.

I have experienced many major moments in my brother's life. More negative than positive ones. His incarceration in Singapore and his current circumstances have stripped him of everything he has ever known in his life, both the material and immaterial things. He has been bared 'naked', forcing him to look inwards and grab onto what is left: his true inner self. There are no fancy designer clothes, shoes, accessories to hide behind anymore, no posh dinners, night outs, homes, cars, trips or gifts to boast with. What's left are his bare thoughts and his emotions. He has learned to identify those, to embrace them, to focus them, to control them and use them for 'good'. His ego-centric attitude has turned into one of empathy, of helping others, of being mindful of others. It showed through many of his actions when in Changi prison. We were humbled by the fact he helped write other inmates' mitigation pleas. I have had so many family members of other inmates reach out to me with thank you messages because my brother helped their family member in prison. We despaired when he was moved into solitary confinement and urged him to address it with prison management, but he didn't want to. Because he 'didn't want to leave the others'. They 'were in this together'. For someone who has lived quite a narcissistic, egoistic life this is an immense transformation. One I have never before witnessed in my brother.

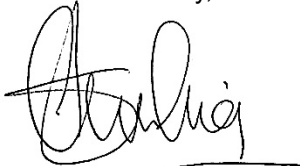
His letters are filled with reflections, insights and advice. They have become journals and through them, we see a new, honest and very vulnerable son and brother. Omer isn't afraid to ask for help anymore, to share his deepest inner thoughts and to share his fears and his challenges with us.

The move to Brooklyn has been very impactful and he has had to reset himself, again. He despairs at times still as the circumstances and the people around him are very different again, but he now knows what to do in order to regain control. He has the tools, the insights and his journals. It will require constant focus and work, but for the first time in our lives we are confident that he finally has a chance at living a calm, peaceful and fulfilling life. We didn't know how to help him [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We do now. And he himself has a lot more insight and understanding of his behaviours. As a family, we will ensure he gets the right help and continues to have the tools he needs [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] With just one aim. And that is for him to have a life in which he finally accepts himself, hopefully learns to love himself again and one where he can find his true purpose and pursue it. All we want for him is to be able to have a chance at living that life. He has never had the peace of mind to do so. But I truly believe he has now reached the point where he can. He is willing AND finally able.

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Sherry Rafiq

[REDACTED]

Exhibit G

Dear The Honourable Sentencing Judge,

I first heard of Omar in April of 2021 when my sister Lia was asked to visit him on behalf of his family in The Netherlands. Omar was alone in Singapore and had no way of staying connected with his family. Her weekly visits helped keep his morale up, provided his family with updates and enabled her to pass on books.

When my sister left Singapore in August of 2022, the baton was passed to me. I joined the 'Supporting Omar' WhatsApp chat, our link to Omar's family, where Sherry, his sister, would send his weekly e-letters and I would share detailed updates of my visits with Omar. I have stuck by Omar's side pretty much unconditionally since I met him. What drew me to Omar? What has made me continue to believe in him? I ask myself the same questions.

Omar's time imprisoned in Singapore surprisingly became an opportunity for him. He took that time to reflect, learn and grow. He consumed books, especially anything connected to Stoicism or philosophy [REDACTED]. Ever since I met Omar, he's been asking why. In a letter from November of 2022 Omar wrote, "Looking back I just don't understand why I always - be it in a relationship, friendship or at work - seem (or want) to self-destruct. [REDACTED]"

[REDACTED] I could try and change my identity." Omar found his why in the books that he consumed, [REDACTED] and his reflective journaling. He was finally able to reflect honestly about himself- the good, the bad and the ugly. While that was incredibly hard for him, it was necessary and long overdue. He was able to make meaning out of his circumstances and to clearly see his mistakes. Omar was able to connect the dots of his rather turbulent life and learned why relationships were so hard for him, why it was so hard for him to resist, why he was a slave to extravagance and excessive comforts.

For the first time in his life, he actually understood himself. As Omar continued to learn about himself through his reading and reflective journaling, his frustration was replaced; first with interest and determination as he learned and ultimately with a feeling of calm. Finally he realised the cost of cheating, of stealing, of repeatedly doing the wrong thing. He was intent on being a better person to himself and to others.

Omar was open about not always being able to feel and show empathy, however, it truly is something that Omar is developing. While at Changi, Omar showed empathy and helped other inmates with their cases, particularly those that have very limited resources. I remember him saying, "This is a place full of pain, so people need plenty of help around here." He got to the point where he saw beyond his immediate needs and wants, took others into consideration and helped those around him. He journaled, "The vilest thing I have located within myself is an indifference to the suffering of others. Now that I understand how rotten I have been, what do I do with myself? I've been more than capable of helping fellow inmates, or some of you. I'm always eager to offer what I have, which I suppose is more than I realize." He continues to show remorse for the mistakes he made in the past and the negative impact he had on the lives of

others. He is determined to be a good man and talks about wanting to help the less fortunate in the future, specifically poor children in developing countries, if given the chance.

Although Omar's personal growth came late, Changi prison transformed him for the better. He left there knowing who he wanted to be, how to best support himself and believing wholeheartedly that he would never repeat the mistakes of his past.

Omar built an imaginary wall while at Changi, adding another brick each Friday as he made it through another week at the strict and often inhumane institution, where he lived more like a stray dog in an animal shelter spending twenty-three hours a day in a cell Monday through Friday and twenty-four hours on weekends. A significant portion of that time was in a single person cell, not as punishment, solely due to overcrowding in other parts of the prison. Omar gave his everything at Changi, despite the harsh conditions. He stayed strong and clear headed, even embracing the experience, knowing that it was aiding his transformation.

In the back of his mind though, was the imaginary mountain that awaited him in the US. Omar and his loved ones thought that Stoicism and his growth at Changi would help him be more prepared for the move to MDC Brooklyn. However, it has been a struggle and the invisible mountain is proving tough and testing him with no routine, fears for his safety and unable to establish a routine. Omar is running out of steam and struggling to find the willpower to continue his fight. I keep reminding him that he will, that he is possibly the most resilient person I know and that even our darkest, most stressful moments are temporary.

Omar has confronted the mess that his life became, understands the patterns of self-destruction and knows that he needs to continue to sort through his shortcomings. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He has chosen a path with purpose. Every struggle, every challenge, every adversity experienced has helped Omar recognize and remove his flaws. It has been a time of reflection, discovery, action and as a result, transformation.

Considering these factors, I ask you to please contemplate the minimum duration of sentencing for Omar.

Sincerely,

Donna Jakins

[REDACTED]

Exhibit H

01 May 2024

Nguyen Khanh Chi

██████████

██████████

To the Honourable Sentencing Judge,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you in regard to the case of Omer, whom I have had the privilege of knowing as a partner since the year 2020.

During that time, I have witnessed everything about his generosity and willingness to help others. I once beheld him noticing a pregnant girl still working at my restaurant, and he asked me about her situation. I told him her husband was not wealthy, so she had to work because her baby would be born in a month, and they needed money to cover expenses. The next day, he took her shopping for everything necessary for a newborn, from strollers to cribs and sterilizers. He helps with a pure heart without expecting anything in return. Even the elderly selling tissues were helped by him. It's because of this personality that I fell in love with him!

He has a warm heart and a strong desire to support others, so he is always surrounded by people he considers friends. They might complain about their hardships, and he would help without thinking or asking for accuracy. At parties where I was present, I have seen how people flattered him, always seeking to please him, and of course, they did not do so without benefit. During such times, I always found a way to leave early because I knew those things were not wholesome. I wanted to counsel him, but I knew it would be fruitless as I believed he wouldn't realize it, which I refer to as "*rest on one's laurels*", and he wouldn't truly understand unless he learned a lesson.

Until later, when he was ordered to court for the wrongdoings he had committed. It was then that I sat and pondered why a person as emotionally rich and virtuous as him would make such mistakes. I was bewildered and somewhat disappointed. But upon closer inspection, I learned that deep down, he is a lonely person who craves attention and affection. Thus, he granted the people around him to take advantage of his kindness.

He knew all those things were wrong, but he was deceiving himself because deep down, he was almost shattered. He needs to conceal his emotions and seek things that aren't real. But eventually, everything comes to an end. He will learn a deserving lesson for what he has done. Life gives him lessons, and he must pay for them one way or another. He realized this after over

01 May 2024

three years in prison, I could sense it from the letters he wrote to me. He recognized the value of friendships, and wealth no longer mattered.

He lost his confidence and arrogance. He recognizes and needs peace in a place without temptations. I am truly happy that after all these years, he has changed in his thinking and vision of life. He always desires to reunite with me and my family, eager to engage in charitable endeavors with me, helping the poor in rural villages. He no longer seeks extravagant luxuries or empty flattery. I am ready and willing to support him on this journey. I eagerly await his return and hope for his swift reunion with me. Both my family and I are looking forward to our forthcoming wedding.

I understand that the offender must be held accountable to the law. However, I implore Your Honor to consider mitigating circumstances for Omer, allowing him to return to his family and contribute positively to society at the earliest opportunity.

I honestly hope that the honorable judge will consider and pass my request!

Sincerely,

Nguyen Khanh Chi